

*In Holman's Hunt famous painting of Jesus the Light of the World Jesus stands with a lantern in his hand knocking on the door of a house under which is written: 'Behold I stand at the door and knock'. Interesting to note that the latch is on the inside. Yes, Jesus knocks on our door alright but it's up to us to open it. He doesn't force entry.*

The people invited to the wedding feast today turned down the invitation. The same happened to the rich young man in another gospel passage. Jesus invited him to leave his cushy life-style behind and follow Him but he turned down the offer and walked away a rather sad man. But Jesus didn't run after him and give him a dressing down. Even though God doesn't force us to follow him there will always be a basic sadness in turning down His invitation. Remember Jesus wept over Jerusalem because his own people 'did not accept him'. He'd be weeping buckets these days with what's sadly happening in the region.

Our response to follow Jesus, however, must not be half-hearted or complacent. Being a catholic Christian could turn out to be little more than a mere label we use. That's like taking Heaven for granted. The man minus his wedding garment would fit into this category.

Some Scripture scholars tell us that the wedding garment refers to ongoing repentance in our lives. Just like most people take a shower every day so too we should regularly clean the inner man or woman by examining our conscience frequently and confessing to a priest. It's said that Pope St John Paul 11 never missed a week without confession. We've discarded the wedding garment when we play down the radical nature of God's call and end up being little different from nominal believers. Being a baptised catholic, for instance, doesn't give us an automatic passport into the heavenly realm. A baptismal

certificate may be needed for admittance to the catholic school but it's no guarantee of entry into Eternal Life unless we take our faith seriously.

Someone remarked to me recently that plenty of people go to Holy Communion - we're not here to judge, but the number of people going to confession lags a long way behind. But in places like Medjugorje there are long queues for this sacrament of God's mercy with several priests hearing for hours on end. Or maybe we consider ourselves sinless. But that stands in contrast to the words of scripture; 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us'. A woman was once overheard praying for her husband. 'Lord, can you please please give my husband one little fault'. The book of Proverbs tells us that the just man falls seven times a day. If that's true it adds up to a lot of repenting in the space of a week. So is complacency or smugness causing us to ditch the wedding garment?

The Gospel calls for a whole-hearted response with no hint of complacency. In this way, proudly wearing our wedding garment we'll feel right at home in the heavenly banquet hall.